

## ***Recognitions, funding and filling a Director's role***

**Greetings, Memphis!** At the beginning of each of our meetings, the City Council often takes time to recognize citizens or groups whose contributions to the City and the common good merit special commendation. This was the case at the Council's meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 6. Numerous Councilmembers cosponsored a Resolution honoring former Councilwoman TaJuan Stout Mitchell for her years of service to the City. Ms. Mitchell served two terms on the Council, and was elected Chair by her colleagues. Prior to that, she served on the Memphis City School Board, also with a term as Chair. In her tenure on the Council, she was instrumental in impactful votes including the development of the Whitehaven Library, the Links at Whitehaven golf course, the Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library, and the vote to bring the Memphis Grizzlies to the city. With the Resolution passed at the December 6 meeting, the Council gave Ms. Mitchell the honorary title of Chair Emeritus and Dean of Historical Records, and declared December 9 – the date of her 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday – as "TaJuan Stout Mitchell Day" in the City of Memphis.



**Councilwoman Patrice Robinson, Councilman Edmund Ford, Sr., former Councilwoman TaJuan Stout Mitchell, former Councilman Harold Collins and Councilman JB Smiley, Jr.**

Also brought to the Council was a Resolution honoring longtime Memphis television sportscaster Jarvis Greer. With a degree in Communications from Memphis State University, Mr. Greer began working for WMC TV on April 30, 1979, ultimately filling roles ranging from runner to Sports Director. A familiar face and voice at Mid-South sporting events, Mr. Greer received an Emmy Award for his work. He will retire after more than 43 years at the station on December 30. The Council's Resolution, sponsored by District 2 Councilman Frank Colvett and District 4 Councilwoman Jana Swearngen-Ware, honorarily renames the section of South Parkway East between South Willett Street and Kyle Street (which runs in front of the home where Mr. Greer grew up) as "Jarvis R. Greer Street."

Finally, the Council has invested significant time over the past year seeking to address the issue of blight, litter and illegal dumping throughout the city. At the December 6 meeting, the Council recognized several groups who also have invested their time into this effort. Councilwoman Rhonda Logan announced the winners of the Memphis City Beautiful Slam Dunk Litter League, a two-month-long citywide litter cleanup competition. Coming in First Place was the Klondike Smokey City Community Development Corporation; Second went to the Stiles Stuffers; and the Orange Mound Blight Patrol brought in Third Place. Altogether, these groups conducted 244 neighborhood cleanups representing 1,840 volunteer hours; they collected 3,657 bags of litter and 1,277 tires. The City Council applauds and thanks these citizens for their willingness to work to make Memphis a cleaner, more beautiful place for all.

### **Council at Work**

**Funding splashpads and – Teqball???** – As it did at its November 15 meeting, the Council accepted and appropriated state and private grants to various City initiatives. The largest of these was a \$625,000 grant from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation for recreation site improvements at Audubon Park. Specifically, the State money will be used to support the installation of a splashpad at the park. And the body accepted an in-kind donation of slightly more than \$5,500 from the U.S. National Teqball Federation for the support and development of the Teqball sport. Teqball is a soccer-based sport played one-on-one or as pairs over a specialized table (learn more here, <https://www.usteqballfederation.com/teqball>). Memphis Parks currently has a limited number of Teqball tables at its community centers, but the USNTF is making a donation of tables to facilitate the sport's inclusion at all City community centers.

**Seeking More for Memphis** – The Council approved its version of a resolution in support of the More for Memphis Initiative. This ambitious undertaking has brought together more than 300 community partners with a shared goal of improving social and economic mobility in Memphis. The project is driven by statistics showing a nearly 40 percent child poverty rate in our city, along with the stark projection that less than 3 percent of children who are born into poverty here will ever move into the highest economic class. Funded by national philanthropic investment group Blue Meridian Partners and managed locally by Seeding Success, More for Memphis aims to identify sustainable ways to support thriving communities by improving connections between systems that support families – such as housing, community development, economic development, education, transportation and health – and by making it possible for residents to

access these resources efficiently. As passed by the Council, the Resolution requests that the project management team provide periodic updates to both the Council and citizens, along with opportunities for citizen engagement in all neighborhoods of Shelby County. The Resolution is designed as a joint one between the Council, the Shelby County Board of Commissioners and the Memphis-Shelby County Schools Board. For more information on the More for Memphis initiative, visit <https://www.seeding-success.org/more-for-memphis-about>.

**New Director for Solid Waste** – Lastly in this report (but certainly not last on the minds of the hundreds of thousands of citizens served by the Division each week), the Council approved the appointment of Philip Davis as Director of the City’s Solid Waste Division. A certified professional geologist and Integrated Solid Waste Management Systems Manager, Mr. Davis has been with the City in Solid Waste since 2012, serving admirably as the Division’s Deputy Director since 2014. He steps into the position filled on an interim basis by now-City Chief Operating Officer Chandell Ryan since May of 2021. The Council has absolute confidence in Mr. Davis’ ability to lead the Division to continued improvement, and we offer him our congratulations on his appointment.

### **The Bottom Line**

I am honored by the opportunity to work with my fellow Council Members to enhance this city we call home. Stay tuned for future Council updates as we keep you informed regarding the activities taking place here at City Hall. As always, for an archive of meeting recordings, you may visit and view our [Council Meetings](#) here.



For Memphis,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martavius D. Jones".

Martavius D. Jones,  
Chairman, Memphis City Council